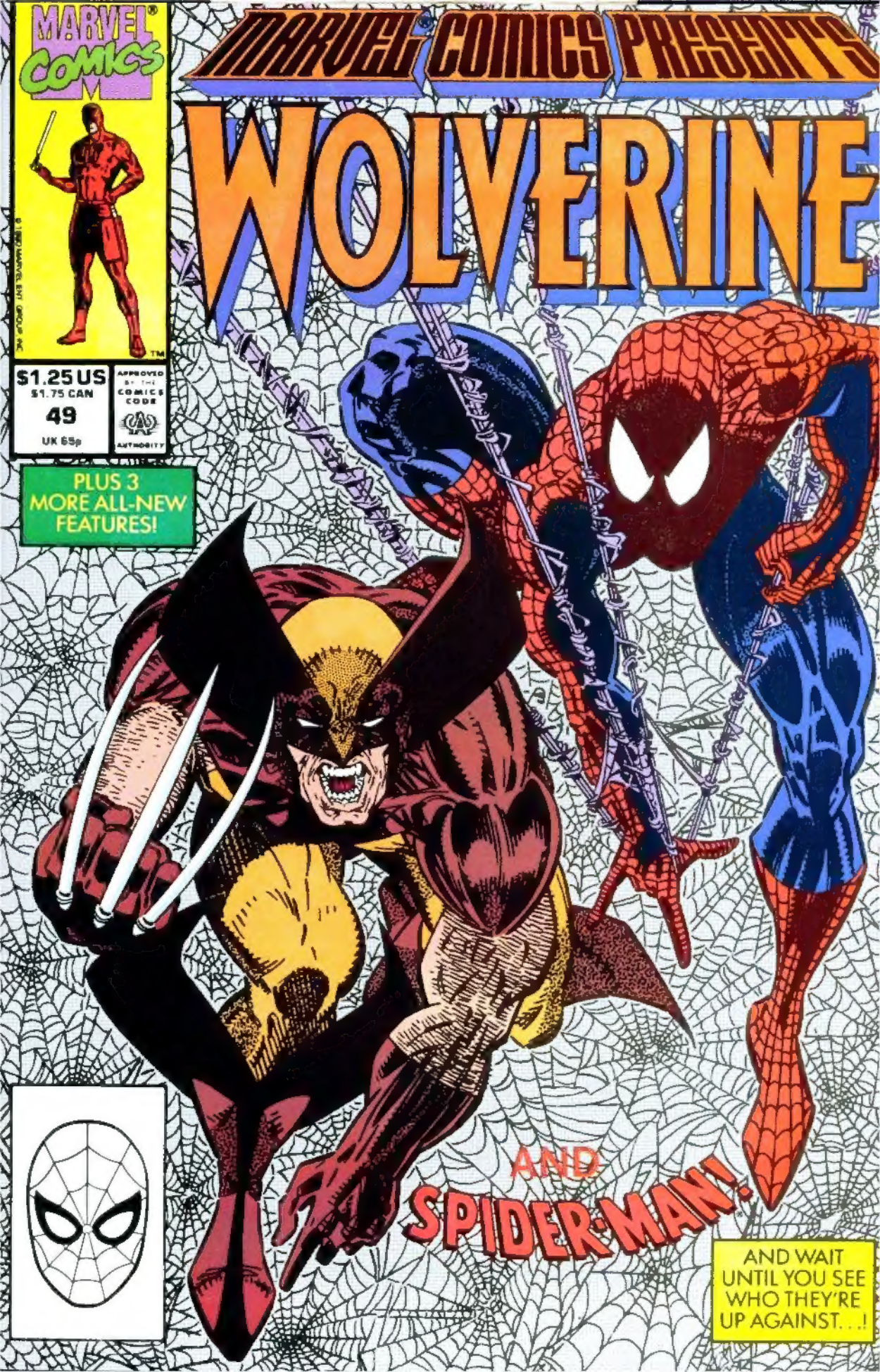
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PLUS 3 MORE ALL-NEW FEATURES!
AND SPIDER-MAN!
AND WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE WHO THEY'RE UP AGAINST. . . !

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"CHILD'S PLAY" — PART 2 OF 3
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DEVIL SLAYER "LOST SOULS" 9

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INKER — Mark McKenna
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"THE END OF . . .DEVIL SLAYER" — PART 4 OF 4
The wounded, weaponless Eric Simon Payne — Devil Slayer — has lost the battle for Potega. Now he must find a way to save his own soul from eternal bondage to Mephisto. But how can he do it, when it appears that Mephisto's disciple, the Flying Dutchman, has already won?

DAREDEVIL 17

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"THE UNBEATABLE FOE"
In a galaxy far from our own, a member of the Imperial Guard — the awesomely powerful alien warrior known as Gladiator confronts his own inner conflicts and discovers that there are things beyond even his tremendous powers.

MARVEL® COMICS PRESENTS™ Vol. 1, No. 49, 1990. Published by MARVEL COMICS, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice President, Publishing. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. **Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.** Published biweekly. Copyright © 1990 by Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.25 per copy in the U.S. and $1.75 in Canada. Subscription rate for 12 issues: U.S. $15.00; Canada $20.00; and foreign $27.00. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS (including all prominent characters featured in the issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) are trademarks of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC.

WOLVERINE
AND
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
HOW DO I GET INTO THESE THINGS?
ONE MINUTE, I'M MERRILY SWINGING ALONG, HOPING TO GET HOME IN TIME FOR SOME OF MARY JANE'S... UGH... TUNA CASSEROLE.
THE NEXT I'M DODGING LASERS ALONGSIDE A MUTANT GHOST / CLONE / LOOK-ALIKE TRYING TO RESCUE A KIDNAPED MUTANT GIRL AND HER FATHER.
THWIP
THWIP
WHAT A LIFE!
THEY KNOW WE'RE HERE.
SNIKT
HIT 'EM HARD AND FAST.
SHAKK
LIFE'S END
PART II
CHILD'S PLAY.

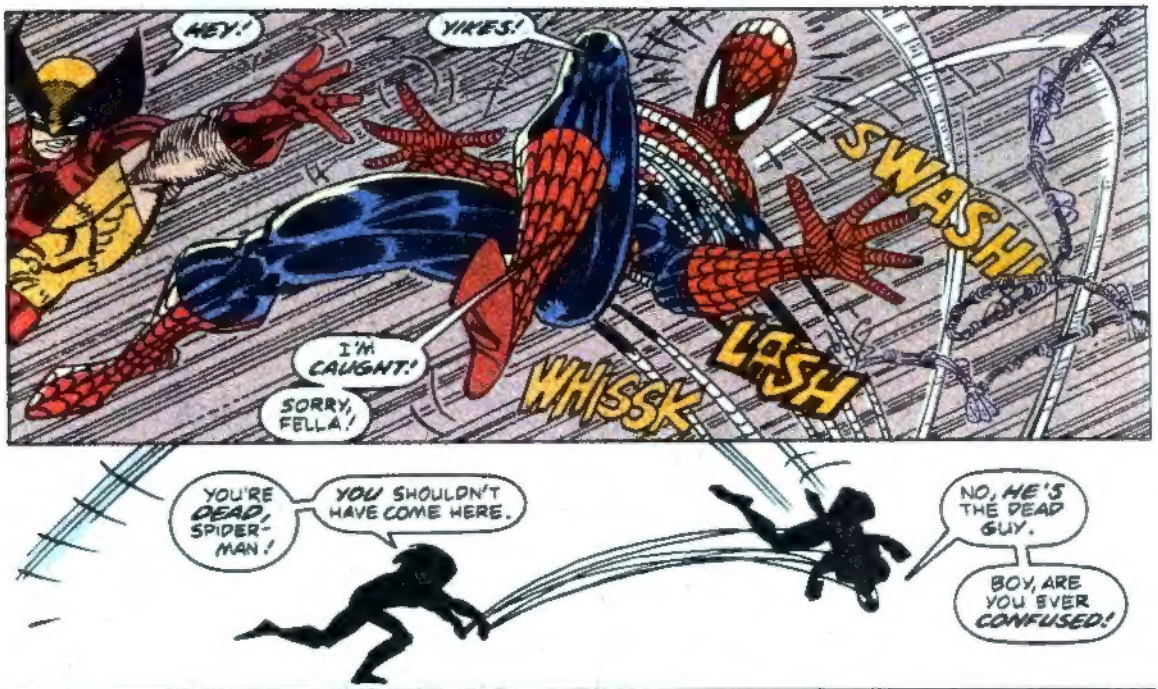
BRAKKAKAKRAKAK
HOW'S THAT?
SWEET.
I...UH... HAVE THIS FRIEND WHO'S A PHOTOGRAPHER AND...
YEAH. YEAH.
GOTTA WATCH IT. SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD. BEST KEEP OUTTA THE LINE OF FIRE IF I CAN.
UH OH, TROUBLE. MY SPIDER-SENSE IS TINGLING.
WE'VE GOT TO MOVE... NOW!
IS THAT SO?
WHY'S THAT?
JUST A HUNCH.
GOTCHA.
GOOD INSTINCTS.
THAT'S HANDY.

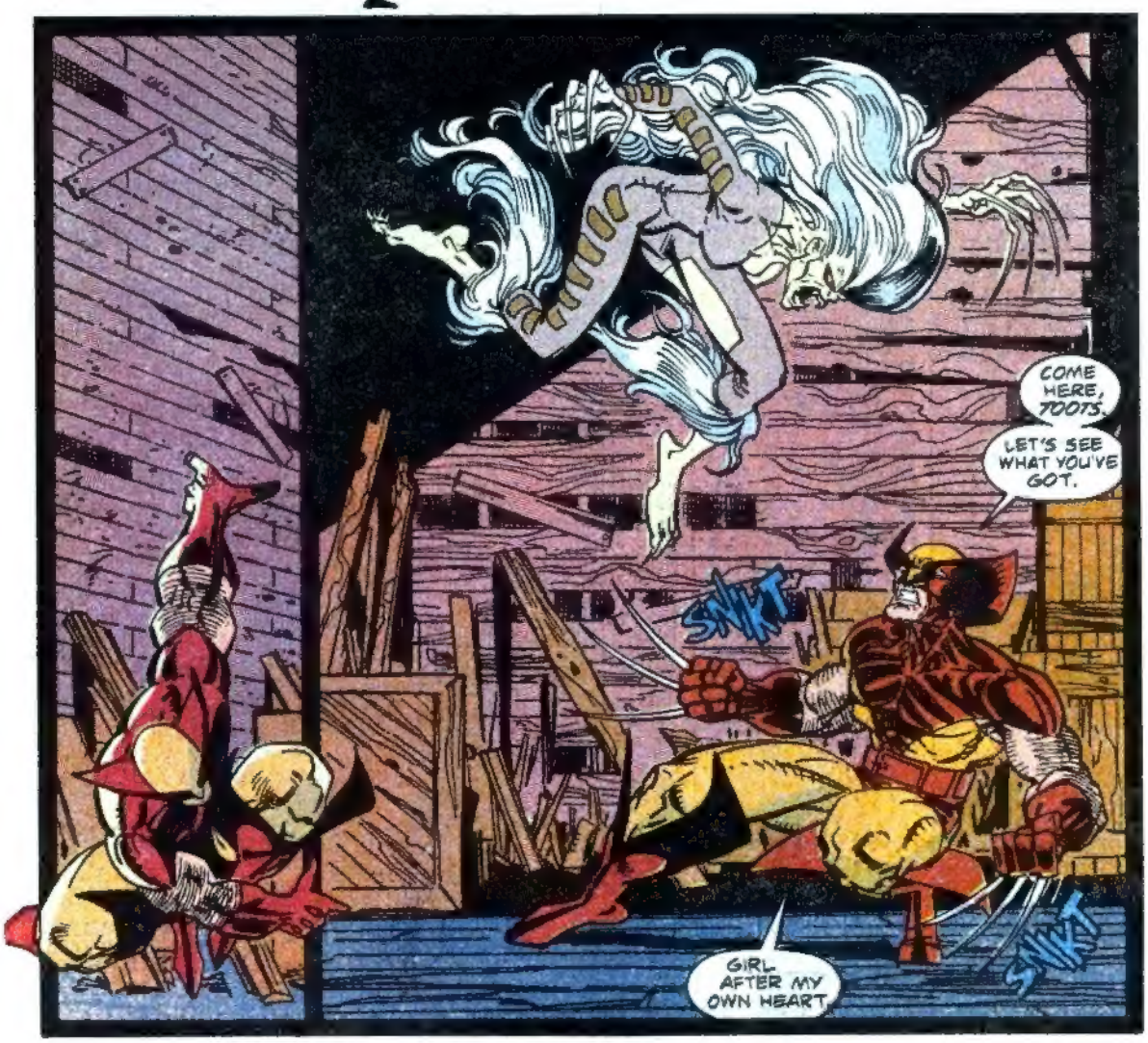
HSSSS...
DON'T MOVE, GIRLIE.
FOOLS-- NOBODY HIDES FROM CRITICAL MASS!
THE MUTANT GIRL AND HER FATHER BELONG TO ME, NOW...

...AS DO YOU.

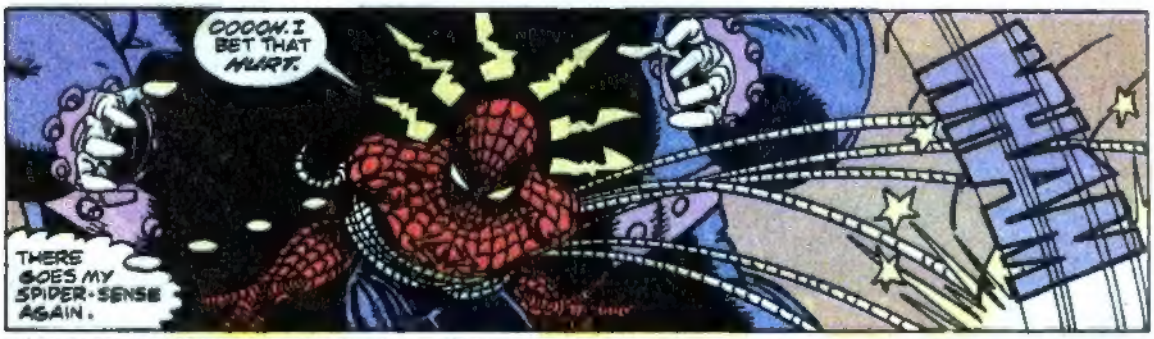
HANG ON TO YOUR COOKIES, WOLVIE.
HUH?

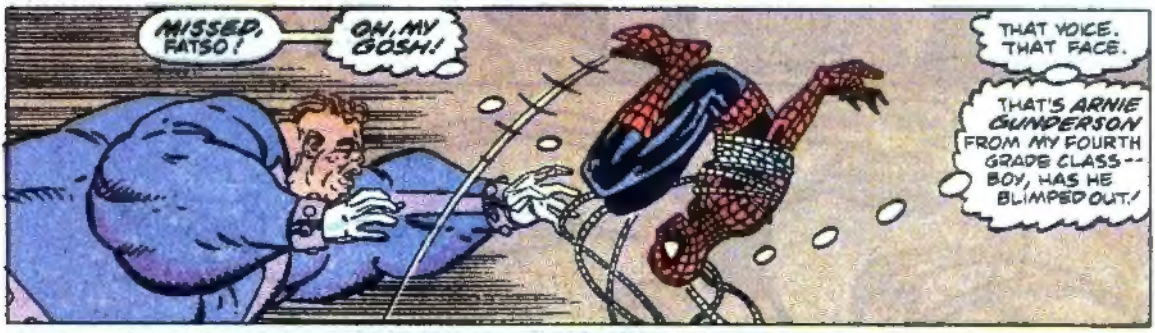
YEE-HAW!
SPIDER-MAN!
HOW FUN.
I SEE YOU'VE BROUGHT A LITTLE FRIEND.
WHIPLASH, BLOODLUST... TO MY SIDE.


HEY!
YIKES!
SWASH!
I'M CAUGHT!
SORRY, FELLA!
WHISSK
LASH
YOU'RE DEAD, SPIDER-MAN!
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE.
NO, HE'S THE DEAD GUY.
BOY, ARE YOU EVER CONFUSED!


COME HERE, TOOTS.
LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.
SNIKT
SNIKT
GIRL AFTER MY OWN HEART

OUCH!
KIDS, DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME.
LEMME GUESS, THE CHECK WAS CASHED, BUT MY FAN CLUB MEMBERSHIP CARD JUST NEVER ARRIVED.
THESE THINGS HAPPEN.
MUST BE A MIX-UP IN THE MAIL ROOM.
UPSY-DAISY.
YOUR TURN, HAIRBALL!
AIN'T I A STINKER?
OH, NO.
SHE'S FAST.
I HESITATE FOR A SECOND.
SHE MAKES USE OF IT.
STILL DON'T LIKE TO HIT A LADY.
I'LL ADJUST.


OOOOH. I BET THAT HURT.
THERE GOES MY SPIDER-SENSE AGAIN.


MISSED, FATSO!
OH, MY GOSH!
THAT VOICE. THAT FACE.
THAT'S ARNIE GUNDERSON FROM MY FOURTH GRADE CLASS-- BOY, HAS HE BLIMPED OUT!

VOTED MOST LIKELY TO BECOME AN OVER-WEIGHT, OBNOXIOUS, EVIL MUTANT AS I RECALL.
WHO'D HAVE THUNK IT?
SNAP
THE KID OUTDID HIMSELF.

NEW PLAN.
DOESN'T SEEM TO WORK MUCH BETTER.
SHE'S OUT OF MY WAY IN A SECOND.

I'M NOT SO LUCKY.
SHE CUTS DEEP.
I AIM TO RETURN THE FAVOR.
OKAY, THAT'S IT.
I'VE TAKEN ENOUGH.
IT'S PAY-BACK TIME FOR THE LUNCH MONEY HE SWIPED!

YOU'VE GOT POWERS, GIRL. USE THEM TO STOP THOSE TWO OR YOUR OLD MAN BITES IT NOW.
DO IT, GIRL.
NICE.
VERY NICE.
THUS, THE "HEROES" FALL...
...AND THE CAPTIVE'S CORRUPTION BEGINS.
CONCLUDES NEXT ISSUE...

LOST SOULS
ADRIFT
COLONEL MCCLOSKEY AND RAMIREZ THINK I'VE LOST! BUT. . I WON'T GIVE UP!
I WON'T LET THE FLYING DUTCHMAN CLAIM MY SOUL!
'CARAMBA! ERIC PAYNE IS ESCAPING!
FEH! TO WHERE? SHANGRI-LA? DEVIL-SLAYER MAY THINK HE'S ESCAPING.
.. BUT ALL THIS ATTEMPT DOES IS OFFER US SPORT BEFORE THE FINAL KILL!
ZAT
SHOOM
BZAP
FWOOM
THE END OF...
DEVIL-SLAYER
MAYBE SO, DUTCHMAN. BUT HE'S STILL GOT ENOUGH PSYCHIC STRENGTH LEFT TO MAKE OUR SHOTS MISS HIM!

BUT YOUR PSYCHIC DAMPENERS'LL BRING HIM BACK TO EARTH!
BINGO!
AARRRRG!
GOT ANY MORE IDEALISTIC MORONS YOU WANT BAGGED?
SILENCE! THINK YOU I WOULD TOLERATE OUR IMMENSE EXPENDITURE OF EFFORT WERE HIS SOUL AS COMMON AS YOURS?
OBSERVE! HIS BODY IS WOUNDED! HIS POSITION IS HOPELESS! HIS UNHOLY FUTURE CERTAIN...
WHUD
YET STILL HE STRUGGLES!
I ALMOST PITY HIM HIS FATE!
SHOOT HIM!
WITH PLEASURE!
CAN'T RUN..! ONLY CHANCE. HOLD STAFF LIKE I DID WHEN THE HOUSE BLEW UP.
AND HOPE ITS SHIELD PROTECTS ME AGAIN!
AAAAAAA
BRATTA BRAT BRATT
ZAP
BZOW
BZOW!
BZOW

BAH! WE STILL LIVE!
WHY OFFER HIM THE MERCY OF A QUICK, CLEAN DEATH?
AN EXCELLENT POINT! WHY, INDEED?
SORRY, DUTCHMAN, BUT YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE!
YOU WON'T GET ANOTHER!
WHAT?
WITH THOSE WOUNDS--NOW?
I WON'T TRY THAT DEFENSE TRICK WITH THIS THING AGAIN! AT LEAST MY PSYCHIC SENSE WAS ABLE TO TAP INTO THE STAFF...
...AND SIPHON SOME ENERGY TO REJUVENATE ME!
NOW WHAT? I CAN'T RUN FOREVER!
I NEED A WEAPON! BUT THERE'S NOTHING HERE!
OR IS THERE...?
KA-BOOM
THAT EXPLOSION SETTLES IT--HEAD FOR THE CHURCH!
AND IF WHAT I NEED ISN'T THERE--
--MY SOUL IS AS GOOD AS LOST!

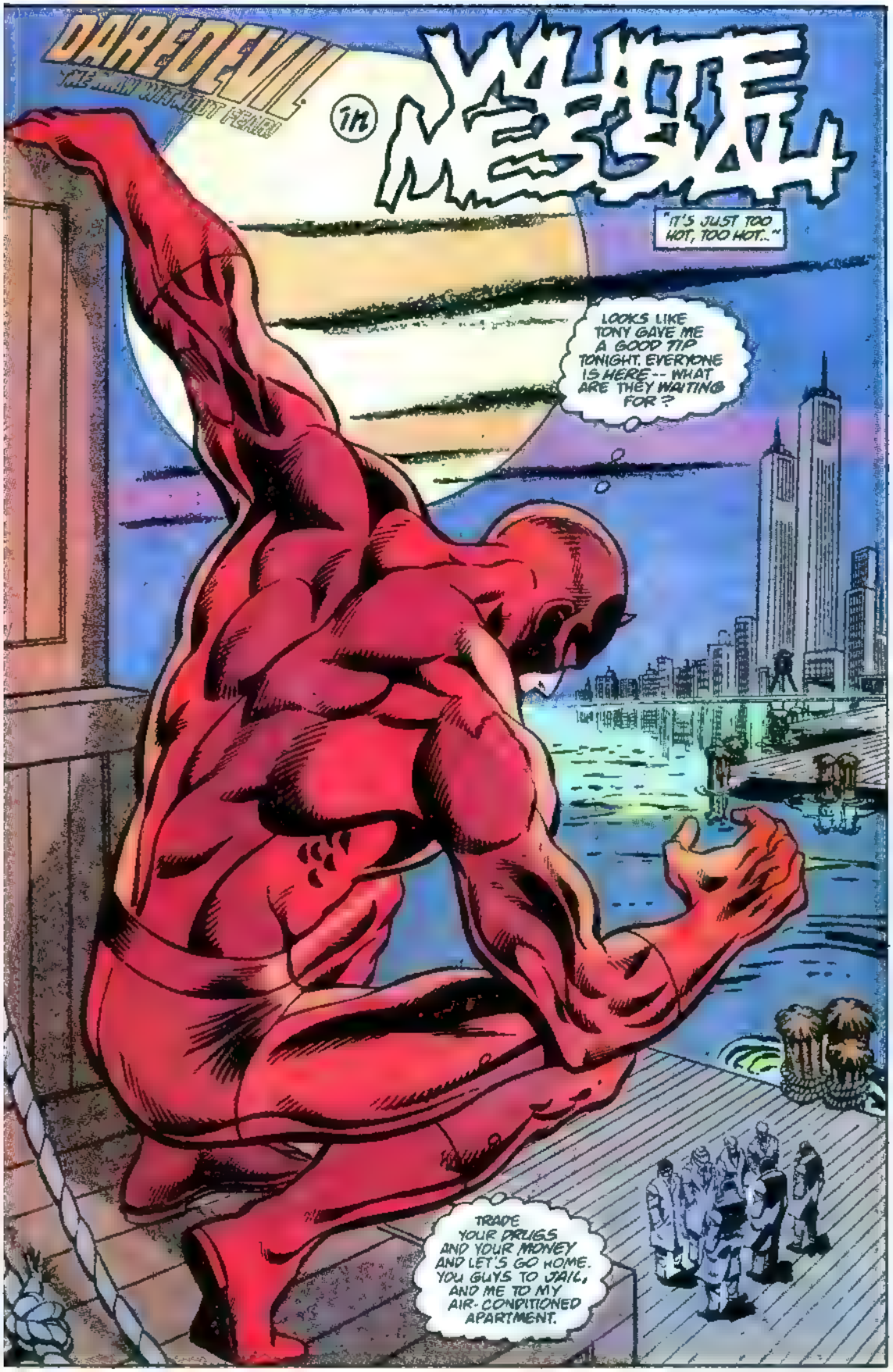
ASSASSIN! I HAVE ENDURED ENOUGH! CEASE THIS CHARADE! ACCEPT YOUR UNHOLY DESIRE!
SURRENDER TO ME YOUR SOUL!
DUTCHMAN--THERE HE GOES!
SMACK! K-BAM!
NOLD! LET HIM REACH HIS GOAL! IT WILL NOT MATTER! HE HAS GIVEN ME WHAT I NEED!
THIS BOAT! IT IS SOAKED WITH HIS BLOOD!
IT SHALL BE THE CATALYST FOR THIS SPELL..
AND HIS DEFEAT! CLIMB ABOARD--AND BE QUICK!
WHY? THE WIND--?
IT IS MORE THAN MERE WIND FOOL!
BEHOLD! I HAVE OPENED THE ABYSS!
GAZE DEEP! GAZE LONG! GAZE IN FEAR AT THE INFERNAL ENTRANCE TO THE REALM OF .
...MEPHISTO!

THE STAGE IS SET. DEVIL-SLAYER MAY THINK WE HAVE REACHED A STANDOFF--BUT HE IS WRONG!
THOUGH I CANNOT TOUCH CONSECRATED GROUND, YOU TWO CAN! HERE ARE YOUR ORDERS!
BECAUSE OF HIS REPEATED REFUSALS, DEVIL-SLAYER MUST SUFFER A THOUSAND-FOLD!
WOOOOSH!
THUS YOU MUST HURL HIS LIVING BODY INTO THESE FLAMES OF PERDITION!
KABLAM
BOOM
HE'S AS GOOD AS FRIED DUTCHMAN!
OKAY, LET'S MAKE AN ENTRANCE--RAMIREZ, FIRE!
ENSURE YOUR DEEDS MATCH YOUR ACT, LACKEY--
--OR I SHALL HLING YOU BOTH INTO THE FIRE!
LET'S FINISH IT QUICK, RAMIREZ. THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS!
SI. BUT WHERE IS HE?
HERE--IN THE BOMB SHELTER!
WHA--? HE TRIPPED ME!
COLONEL McCLOSKEY--LOOK OUT! THE EDGE--!
KLANK
THUD
NO!

SAVE ME!!!
IT'S TOO LATE FOR YOU-- BUT NOT FOR ME!
YOU'RE WRONG, COLONEL!
PAYNE-- WAIT! HELP ME AND I'LL HELP YOU AGAINST THE DUTCHMAN!
YOU CAN'T MCCLOSKEY, DON'T YOU REALIZE? HE OWNS YOU--BODY AND SOUL.
WELL FOUGHT, ASSASSIN! IT APPEARS YOU HAVE WON!
DUTCHMAN-- HELP! ARMOR'S TOO HEAVY, CAN'T PULL MYSELF UP!
YOUR ENEMY'S HELPLESS, DEVIL-SLAYER GO AHEAD, SAVOR THE TASTE OF VENGEANCE AND VICTORY COMBINED!
YOU ABANDON HIM?
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN FAILURES.
AND I HAVE NO INTEREST IN BEING AN EXECUTIONER FOR YOU!
AS I TOLD YOU BEFORE I HAVE RENOUNCED THE ASSASSIN'S ROAD
D-DUTCHMAN MASTER--! GIVE ME ANOTHER CHANCE--
VERY WELL, ERIC PAYNE IF VENGEANCE HAS BECOME TOO COLD, TOO BITTER A BREW FOR YOU, THEN YOU NEED ONLY DO NOTHING! AS YOU CAN SEE, SOON HE WILL FALL!
AND WHEN HE DOES SO WILL YOU! ONLY SOMEONE BEYOND REDEMPTION WOULD CONDEMN SO HELPLESS AN ENEMY!

YOU TURN AWAY?!
YES...
...AS I SAID, I'VE MADE MY DECISION.
I SALUTE YOU YOU HAVE DONE WHAT IS RIGHT...
...FOR ME!
WE'LL KNOW FOR SURE IN A FEW SECONDS, DUTCHMAN.
GOOD! AS I'D HOPED, IT'S HERE IN THE ALTAR...
...THE ONLY [illegible] THAT CAN STOP THE FLYING DUTCHMAN!
SORRY, DUTCHMAN, BUT...
...YOU LOSE!
EH--? WHAT? [illegible]--?!
NO! HOLY WATER!
FWAAM

IT'S FINALLY OVER I'VE WON. BUT WHAT DID I WIN? MY SOUL IS STILL MINE
..POTEGA AND ITS PEOPLE ARE BACK TO THE WAY THEY WERE BEFORE I ARRIVED...
...AND YOU, MC CLOSKEY, I SAVED YOUR LIFE
TOO BAD SPLASHING HOLY WATER ON THE FLYING DUTCHMAN WASN'T ENOUGH TO ALSO FREE YOUR SOUL!
YES DEVIL SLAYER HIS SOUL IS LOST-- UNLIKE YOURS!
FLYING DUTCHMAN!
I'M A SITTING DUCK! AND UNTIL I LEARN HOW TO USE THE POWER IN THIS STAFF, I'M HELPLESS AGAINST A FULL FORCE DEMONIC ASSAULT!
YOU ARE SO VULNERABLE
PITY..YOUR SUCCESS RENDERED ME TOO WEAK TO ATTACK YOU NOW. BUT ALL YOU HAVE WON IS A BRIEF RESPITE.
WHEN NEXT WE MEET, I WILL WIN-- AND THEN YOU WILL LOSE YOUR SOUL!
NO, DUTCHMAN YOU RE WRONG THIS IS WHY-- DEVIL SLAYER IS DEAD!
I'VE WON A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE, ONE FREE OF MY PAST! I'M NOT GOING TO BLOW IT!
THE END.


DAREDEVIL
THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR
in
"IT'S JUST TOO HOT, TOO HOT..."
LOOKS LIKE TONY GAVE ME A GOOD TIP TONIGHT. EVERYONE IS HERE -- WHAT ARE THEY WAITING FOR?
TRADE YOUR DRUGS AND YOUR MONEY AND LET'S GO HOME. YOU GUYS TO JAIL, AND ME TO MY AIR-CONDITIONED APARTMENT.

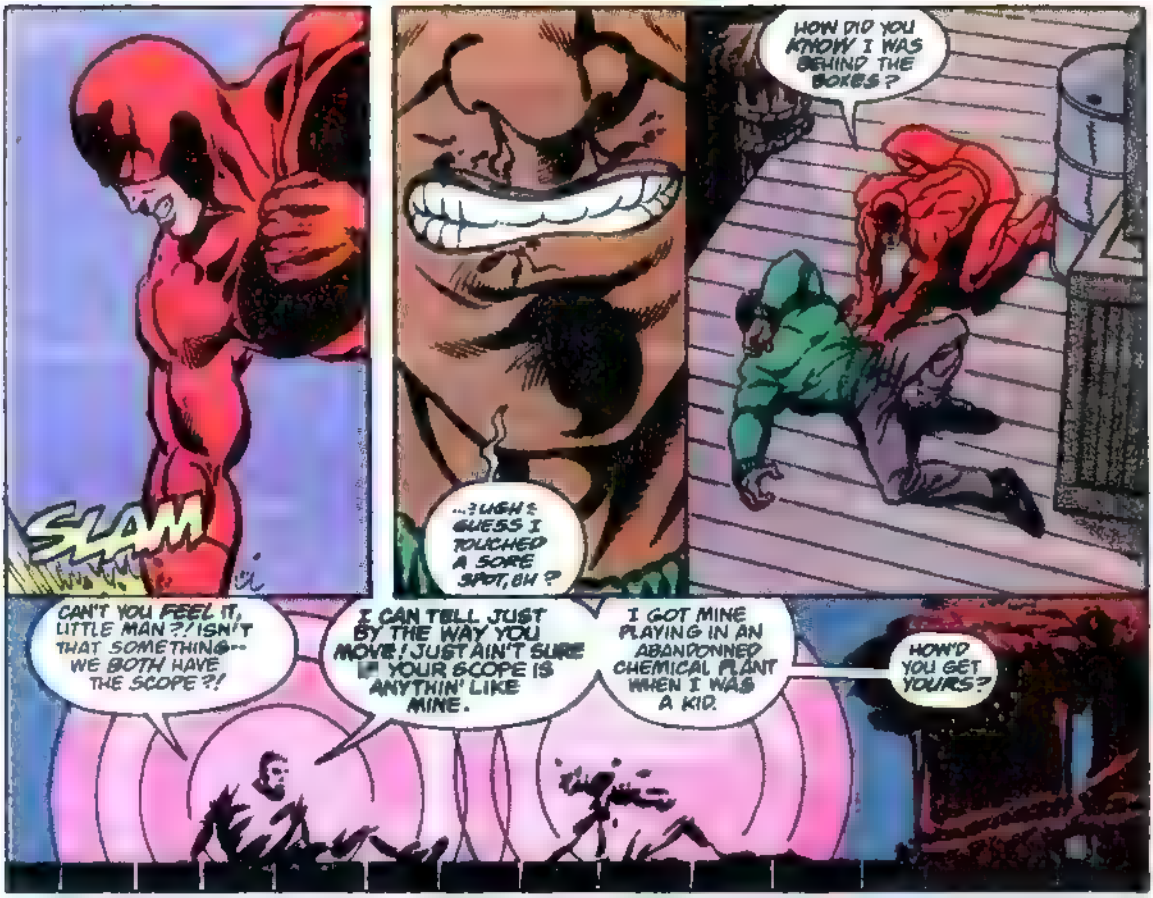
HMM... MOSQUITOS ARE OUT TONIGHT ALL YOU'RE TRYING TO DO IS MAKE IT THROUGH THE HEAT LIKE ALL OF US, RIGHT, LITTLE GUY?
JUST SUCKING BLOOD TO STAY ALIVE NOBLE ENOUGH
TONIGHT, YOU LIVE.
IT'S FINALLY GETTING STARTED. I'D BETTER GET CLOSER
SWOOSH
BUMPH
WUMP

LUCKILY, THE HEAT HASN'T AFFECTED MY RADAR SENSE AT ALL.
THERE ARE SEVEN OF THEM-- FOUR ON ONE SIDE, THREE ON THE OTHER. I'M PICKING UP A STRONGE SIGNAL ON ONE OF THEM, THOUGH HE'S LARGE... AH, YES--
"...SCOPE!"
"TONY TOLD ME HE WAS GOING TO BE HERE. EVERY LAW AGENCY FROM THE N.Y.P.D. TO INTERPOL IS LOOKING FOR THIS GUY
"ANYTIME ONE OF THEM GETS CLOSE, HE ESCAPES. THAT'S WHY THEY CALL HIM SCOPE. HE KNOWS WHEN THE HEAT IS ON."
WELL, TONIGHT THE HEAT IS ALMOST DEFINITELY ON. TONIGHT, I'M GOING TO BURN HIM."
GENTLEMEN, BEFORE WE PROCEED, THERE'S SOMEONE BEHIND THOSE BOXES...
SOMETHING'S WRONG. THEY'RE ON TO ME -- BUT HOW?!
"THEY'RE POINTING MACHINE-GUNS... I HAVE TO MOVE NOW!"

HIGH-CALIBER WEAPONRY-- I HAVE TO MOVE FAST, NO SLIP-UPS.
F-PAP
F-PAP
SHOOT HIM!
BUMPH
BUMPH
KLMF
KLMF
WELL, IT'S YOUR MOVE, SCOPE..
SO I FINALLY GET TO MEET THE INFAMOUS DAREDEVIL.
I KNEW WE WOULD CROSS PATHS IF I DID BUSINESS IN THE EAST I WISH THE SITUATION WERE MORE... CORDIAL--

-- BUT THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT, RIGHT?
OKAY-- THE STRONG, SILENT TYPE
YOU SAID IT WAS MY MOVE. WELL, LITTLE MAN, YOU'LL FIND I HAVE MANY MOVES..
...A LOT MORE THAN THOSE PUNKS YOU JUST TOOK OUT LET'S GET BUSY!
"BATS-- HE'S GOT BASEBALL BATS TWO OF THEM!
SHEWF
SHEWF
SHEWF
SHEWF
"THE HEAT RESIDUES COMING OFF THE BAT ARE STRANGE...
THE BATS ARE METALLIC.
KAWK
NINE POINT EIGHT-- BUT THIS AIN'T THE OLYMPICS, LITTLE MAN.

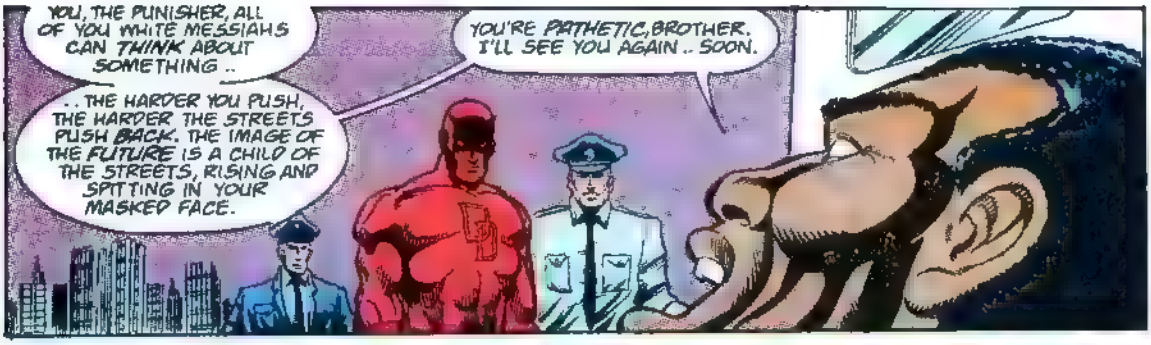
NO, IT'S WAR--AND I CAN'T AFFORD TO BE UNARMED!
YOU'RE A JOKE! YOU KNOW WHAT THEY CALL YOU IN MIAMI? WHITE MESSIAH!
BAP BAP
WHO MADE YOU PROTECTOR OF THE STREETS? WHO GAVE YOU THE RIGHT?
YOU GAVE YOURSELF THE RIGHT. YOU JUST WOKE UP AND DECIDED TO SAVE THE WORLD.
YOUR WAY IS PART OF THE PROBLEM, LITTLE MAN!
BUMP
THIS GUY IS TOO BIG--TOO POWERFUL! MUST TAKE HIM OUT FAST WITH MINIMUM DAMAGE!
WHAM
THERE'S ONLY ONE PROBLEM HERE--YOU!
KRAK
SLAM


SLAM
...? UGH! GUESS I TOUCHED A SORE SPOT, EH?
HOW DID YOU KNOW I WAS BEHIND THE BOXES?
CAN'T YOU FEEL IT, LITTLE MAN?! ISN'T THAT SOMETHING-- WE BOTH HAVE THE SCOPE?!
I CAN TELL JUST BY THE WAY YOU MOVE! JUST AIN'T SURE IF YOUR SCOPE IS ANYTHIN' LIKE MINE.
I GOT MINE PLAYING IN AN ABANDONNED CHEMICAL PLANT WHEN I WAS A KID.
HOW'D YOU GET YOURS?

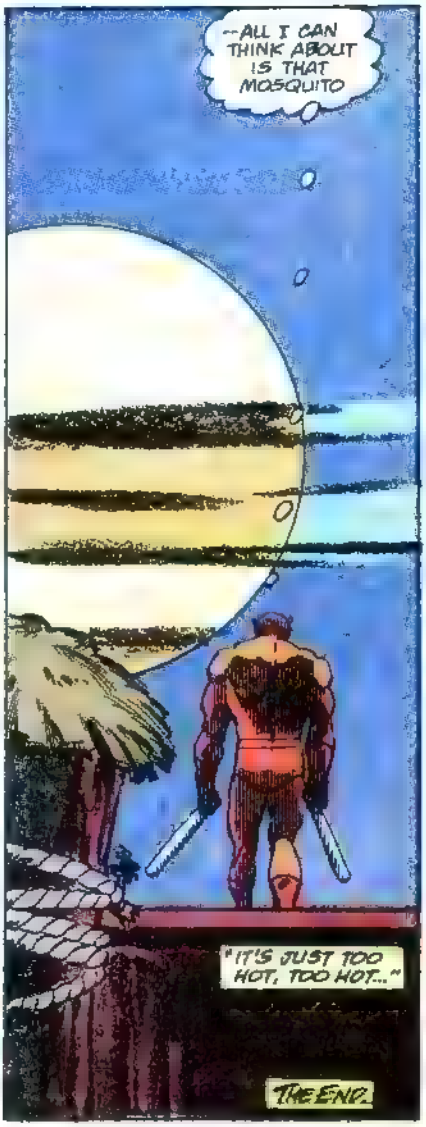
YOU AND I ARE BROTHERS, DEVIL-- A FREAK OF CRIME AND A FREAK OF JUSTICE..
GET THIS STRAIGHT, SCUM! SCOPE OR NO SCOPE--WE'RE NOTHING ALIKE! GOT IT--NOTHING ALIKE!

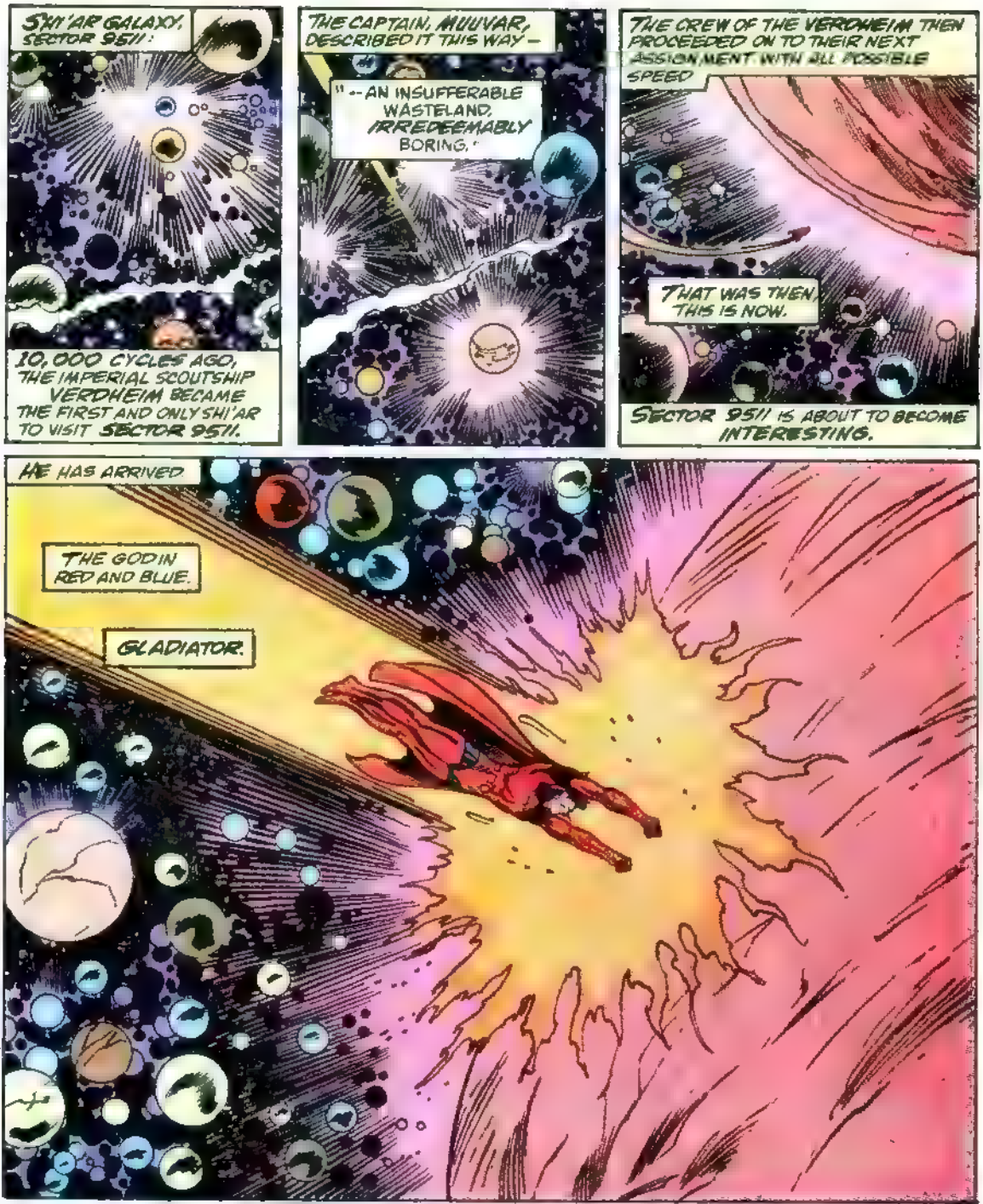
CALM DOWN, D.D., WE GOT IT FROM HERE.

SOON..
DON'T WORRY, BROTHER--YOU KEEP MY SECRET, I'LL KEEP YOURS, AND EVERY NIGHT WE CAN LAUGH AT EACH OTHER.
..TWO JOKES


YOU, THE PUNISHER, ALL OF YOU WHITE MESSIAHS CAN THINK ABOUT SOMETHING ..
.. THE HARDER YOU PUSH, THE HARDER THE STREETS PUSH BACK. THE IMAGE OF THE FUTURE IS A CHILD OF THE STREETS, RISING AND SPITTING IN YOUR MASKED FACE.
YOU'RE PATHETIC, BROTHER. I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN .. SOON.

THAT CHARACTER MAY HAVE HAD HEIGHTENED SENSES, OR I MAY JUST HAVE GIVEN MYSELF AWAY BEHIND THE BOXES WITHOUT KNOWING IT. OR... HE MIGHT BE ONE OF THOSE MUTANTS WE READ SO MUCH ABOUT.
HE'S RIGHT ABOUT THE STREET PUSHING BACK. BUT SO FAR I'M STILL HERE TO SEE IT NEVER GETS OUT OF CONTROL.
FUNNY THING IS, I CAN'T DEAL WITH ANY OF THIS RIGHT NOW--

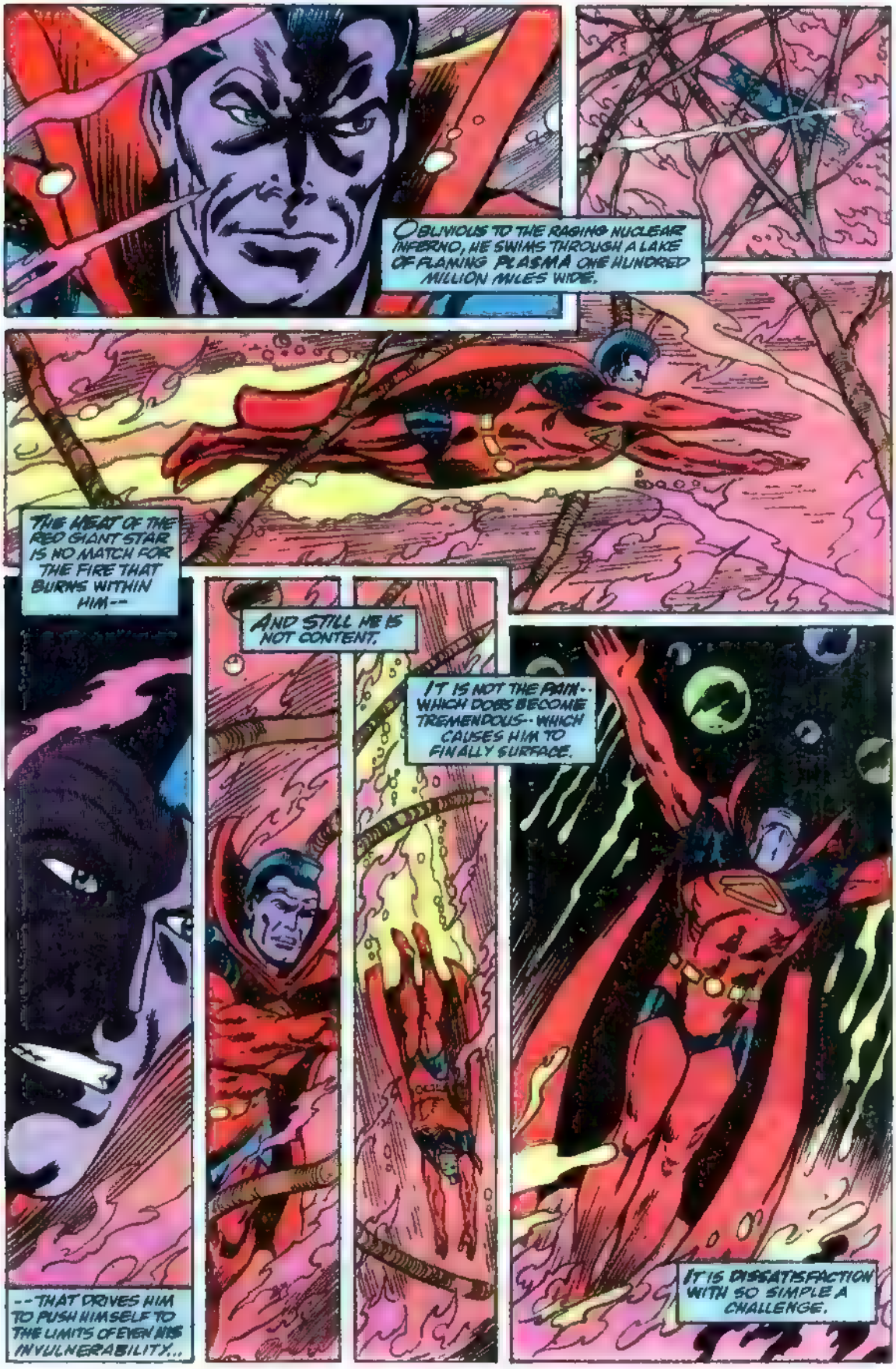

--ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS THAT MOSQUITO
"IT'S JUST TOO HOT, TOO HOT..."
THE END.


SHI'AR GALAXY, SECTOR 95II:
10,000 CYCLES AGO, THE IMPERIAL SCOUTSHIP VERDHEIM BECAME THE FIRST AND ONLY SHI'AR TO VISIT SECTOR 95II.
THE CAPTAIN, MUUVAR, DESCRIBED IT THIS WAY —
"--AN INSUFFERABLE WASTELAND, IRREDEEMABLY BORING."
THE CREW OF THE VERDHEIM THEN PROCEEDED ON TO THEIR NEXT ASSIGNMENT WITH ALL POSSIBLE SPEED
THAT WAS THEN. THIS IS NOW.
SECTOR 95II IS ABOUT TO BECOME INTERESTING.
HE HAS ARRIVED.
THE GOD IN RED AND BLUE.
GLADIATOR.

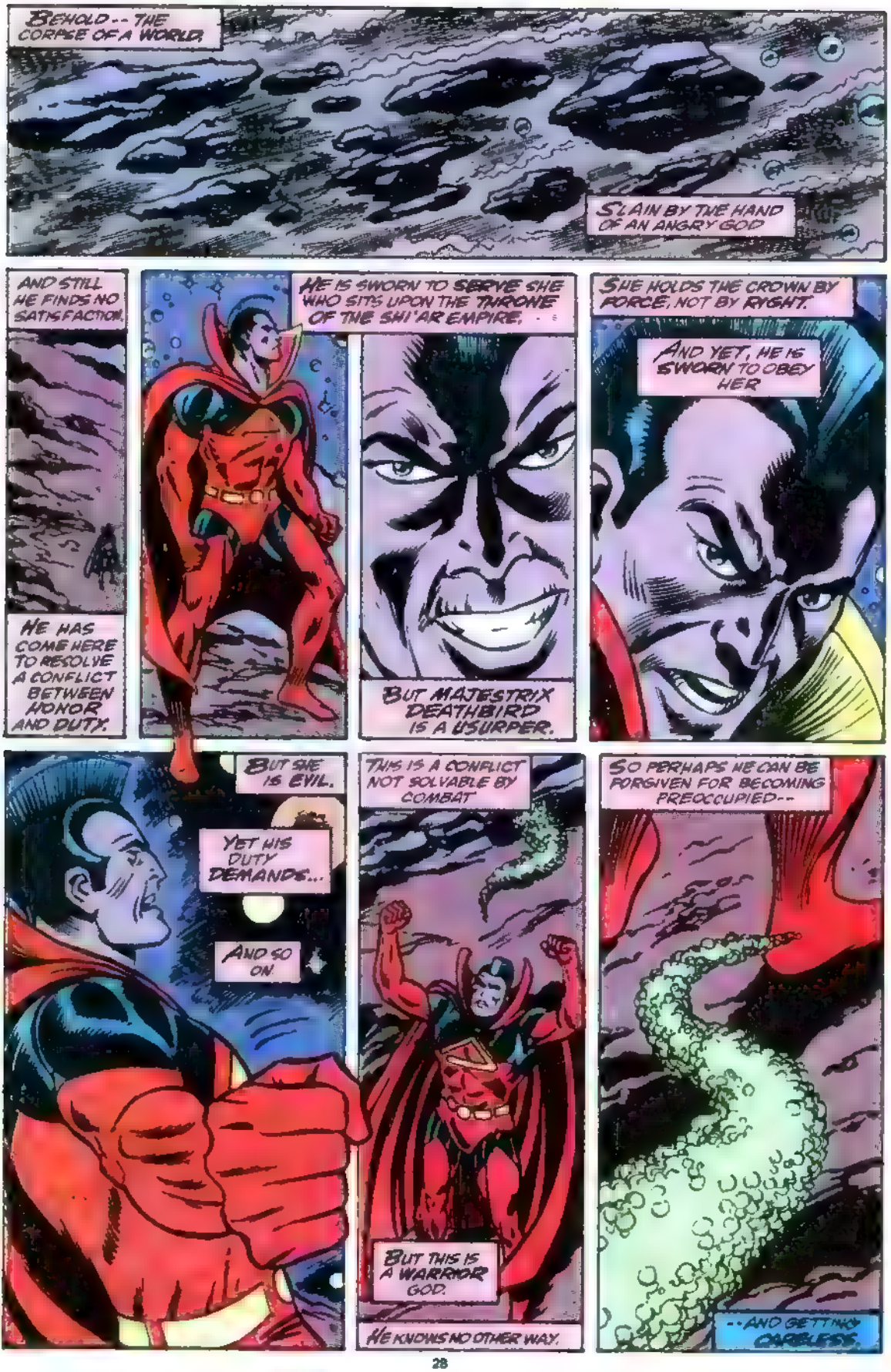
GLADIATOR

in

THE UNBEATABLE FOE


OBLIVIOUS TO THE RAGING NUCLEAR INFERNO, HE SWIMS THROUGH A LAKE OF FLAMING PLASMA ONE HUNDRED MILLION MILES WIDE.
THE HEAT OF THE RED GIANT STAR IS NO MATCH FOR THE FIRE THAT BURNS WITHIN HIM--
--THAT DRIVES HIM TO PUSH HIMSELF TO THE LIMITS OF EVEN HIS INVULNERABILITY...
AND STILL HE IS NOT CONTENT.
IT IS NOT THE PAIN.. WHICH DOES BECOME TREMENDOUS.. WHICH CAUSES HIM TO FINALLY SURFACE.
IT IS DISSATISFACTION WITH SO SIMPLE A CHALLENGE.

HE RETURNS TO THE VOID.
HIS GAZE PIERCES THE DARKNESS LIKE A RAY OF SEARING HEAT.
THIS LIFELESS ROCK HAS WEATHERED THE DEATH OF GALAXIES.
THE RAGE WHICH IT SPAWNED HAS LONG SINCE GONE TO OTHER STARS, AND BECOME DUST.
ALL OF THAT IS ULTIMATELY MEANINGLESS AGAINST THE RAGE OF A GOD.
TO GLADIATOR, IT IS SIMPLY THERE.
AND BECAUSE IT IS THERE, IT MUST BECOME A RECEPTACLE FOR HIS BUILDING FRUSTRATION.
THERE IS NO SOUND IN THE AIRLESS VOID OF SPACE.
BUT IF THERE WAS, IT MIGHT SOUND SOMETHING LIKE--
THOOM


BEHOLD -- THE CORPSE OF A WORLD.
SLAIN BY THE HAND OF AN ANGRY GOD
AND STILL HE FINDS NO SATISFACTION.
HE HAS COME HERE TO RESOLVE A CONFLICT BETWEEN HONOR AND DUTY.
HE IS SWORN TO SERVE SHE WHO SITS UPON THE THRONE OF THE SHI'AR EMPIRE.
BUT MAJESTRIX DEATHBIRD IS A USURPER.
SHE HOLDS THE CROWN BY FORCE, NOT BY RIGHT.
AND YET, HE IS SWORN TO OBEY HER
BUT SHE IS EVIL.
YET HIS DUTY DEMANDS...
AND SO ON
THIS IS A CONFLICT NOT SOLVABLE BY COMBAT
BUT THIS IS A WARRIOR GOD.
HE KNOWS NO OTHER WAY.
SO PERHAPS HE CAN BE FORGIVEN FOR BECOMING PREOCCUPIED--
--AND GETTING CARELESS.

WHAT THE--?!
GREAT R'AU!
A DEVONIAN XONTAR--!

AAAGH!
THE CREATURE IS SHAPED BY HIS OWN RAGE.
FED BY HIS OWN STRENGTH,
FINDING HIMSELF EQUALED IN PHYSICAL MIGHT, HE LASHES OUT AT THE CREATURE WITH FEARSOME RADIATIONS.
BUT FOR EVERY ACTION...
...THERE IS AN EQUAL AND OPPOSING--
--REACTION!

UNNGH!
AAARRGH!
THE PAIN... UNBEARABLE...
MUST... BREAK... FREE...
BUT DESPERATION ONLY SPURS THIS MONSTER FROM THE ID TO MORE FURIOUS STRUGGLES OF ITS OWN--
--CREATING A CYCLE OF CONFLICT...
...A LETHAL FEEDBACK.
UUNNNHE
THE ENCROACHING DARKNESS BRINGS FORTH--
--ENLIGHTENMENT.
IN A SUDDEN FLASH OF INSIGHT...
...HE REALIZES--
--IN REALITY--
--HE IS KILLING HIMSELF
THEN, BEFORE THE END, A PARADOXICAL THING HAPPENS.

IN THIS MOMENT OF SATORI, HE KNOWS THAT THIS IS A BATTLE HE CAN NEVER WIN.
THEREFORE, HE STOPS TRYING.
HE SURRENDERS HIMSELF TO THE SILENCE OF THE ETERNAL ABYSS...
...BECOMING AS ONE WITH THE STARK FACT OF HIS EXISTENCE, AND NOTHING MORE.
HIS RAGE HAS LEFT HIM.
IN TURN, HIS DOPPELGANGER ASSUMES THE SHAPE OF HIS NEW CONSCIOUSNESS.
THIS GREAT AND TERRIBLE WARRIOR HAS FOUND VICTORY IN SURRENDER.
IT PERPLEXES HIM.
HE HAS HEARD WHISPERS OF A TRIBE OF WARRIORS WHO PRACTICE SUCH A PHILOSOPHY, WHO LIVE ON A MOON CALLED TITAN.
PERHAPS HE SHALL SEEK THEM OUT.
AND LEARN FROM THEM.
THE END

MARVEL® READERS PRESENT

% MARVEL COMICS GROUP-387 Park Avenue South-New York, New York-10016

Attention correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your name and address though we will withhold that info by request!

Dear Terry,

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #41 was somewhat of an improvement over the last couple of issues. I didn't care for the Wolverine story too much. So far this has been a pretty dull storyline. Part 4 of the Wonder Man story, "Stardust Miseries," was the first one I liked. The first three parts just weren't up to my expectations. Maybe it's just been a little slow in developing. The Hercules story has been the only one I've really enjoyed the past couple of issues. Just the right amount of action, and the humor involving Skyppi, the Recorder, and Hercules himself was perfect. Too bad this was only a three-parter though. As far as the Freedom Force feature goes. . .well, it was okay for a one-parter. Certainly better than those awful fourth features appearing in the last couple of issues.

On the subject of the fourth feature I would like to comment on a remark you made in the letters page. In response to one letter you defend your one-shot stories, stating that most readers appreciate your efforts to spotlight lesser known characters. No offense, but I don't consider the Hulk, Spider-Man, Thor, Captain America, Silver Surfer, etc. lesser used characters. These all have been subjects for the fourth feature, and some more than once. And to tell you the truth, quite a few of these stories haven't been very good. As far as lesser used characters go—hey let's see more of them in multi-part stories. That's what MCP should be about. If it were up to me, no character with their own title would even appear in this book. But I suppose when it comes down to it, I'm asking too much.

So why not try this? First feature—I hate to even suggest this, but rather than seeing major Marvel characters in lousy one-shot stories, put them in multi-part stories here, or you can make Wolverine a permanent feature here if you must. For the second and third features—here's where you can present the more popular characters without their own title. You can put in characters like the Beast, Archangel, Vision, Doctor Pym, etc. For the fourth feature—multi-part stories featuring the lesser known heroes such as Red Wolf, Sunfire, Stingray, etc. Hey, you can create new heroes here if you want too. The Coldblood series was one of the best to appear in the pages of MCP. Also, I'd like to request for the zillionth time that you spotlight a different feature each issue on the front cover.

Well, to sum everything up, I'd like to see some lesser used characters in multi-part stories. While there have been a few good one-part tales, most of the stories hurt the quality of the book, in my opinion. If I've been a little too critical or have repeated myself from other letters a little too much, well what can I say? Anyway, since I'm still reading your title at this time, you must be doing something right.

William Blevins
35 w. George
Hazel Park, MI 48030

We're glad you're still with us, William, and we're glad you're still writing us and telling your opinion. Actually, the format that you suggest for this book is very close to the one we've been adopting lately, except (of course) for the controversial fourth story. We apologize but we don't plan to change our one-shot policy any time in the near future. You're quite right in your claim that we don't always spotlight lesser known characters there, but we do present quite a lot of them. We also use the space to spotlight lesser known writers and artists quite often. This may be why you don't like many of them. Who knows, maybe the next Chris Claremont or John Byrne will get his start doing a one-shot in these pages! There are just so many stories created by so many different people for this book, we can't possibly give them all multi-part stories. We're sorry for that, William (and everyone else who feels the same), but we know you'll enjoy what we have in store for you in the future.

Dear Terry,

Bi-Weekly Status Report #42:

Wolverine: Welcome back, Marv Wolfman. This guy was always one of my favorite Marvel writers. I'm very glad to see him doing Wolverine, but I'd also like to see him writing something else. Let's see you sink your teeth into a new series, guy, like Nick Fury/S.H.I.E.L.D. or something. Think about it. For now, though, just keep up the good work with John Buscema on Wolverine.

Wonder Man: Michael Higgins is writing a great serial, but it seems to me that this is more of an Avengers story than a Wonder Man story. It's a good story with great art, but try it without his fellow Avengers next time, I think Wondy can go at it alone. He's got what it takes, and so do you.

Union Jack: this is the type of story I like. It's been too long since we've seen the ol' new Union Jack. My compliments to Messrs. Nicieza and Dwyer. Perfect. Three stars, two thumbs up! You know Fabian, now that NEW WARRIORS is set to go, why not drop Jack in for a visit?

Daughter of the Dragon: It's good to see Jo Duffy back at the typewriter. It's been too long. More, more. This was a nice short and sweet tale. I'd really like to see more of Nightwing Restorations. How about it?

Serial suggestions: Ka-Zar, Black Widow, Machine Man.

One-shots: Thundra, Doc Sampson, Shroud, Giant Man.

Well, till next time, see you at the mov. . .er MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS.

Len Biehl
1237 Pinoak
Rantoul, IL 61866

We'll consider all of your suggestions, Len, thanks for writing. We'll tell Fabe to put UJ in his NEW WARRIORS series, too. By the way, that book is coming out pretty soon so everybody should look for it. It's sure to be another winner (but how could you expect anything less from the Fabulous One?). As for Jo Duffy, you can check out her work in the upcoming FALLEN ANGELS series which is due for release soon also. That book, by the way, is not only drawn by Colleen Doran, but it is edited by the hardest working man in comics (or all of publishing for that matter), Marvel's own Bob Harras. Take a bow, Bob, you always deserve it.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
(REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Title of Publication: MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS
1B. Publication No.: 1044-7180
2. Date of Filing: November 1, 1989
3. Frequency of Issue: BI-MONTHLY
3A. No. of issues published annually: 24
3B. Annual subscription price: $30.00 U.S.
$40.00 Canada.
4. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc., 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.
5. Complete address of the headquarters of general business offices of the publisher: 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.
6. Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editor, and managing editor: Stan Lee, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. Editor: Tom DeFalco, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. Managing Editor: Tom DeFalco, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.
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10. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION.
A. Total No. Copies Printed (net press run): Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 281,765. Single issue nearest to filing date: 245,225.
B. Paid Circulation. 1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 153,295. Single issue nearest to filing date: 132,100. 2) Mail subscriptions: Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 230. Single issue nearest to filing date: 300.
C. Total Paid Circulation: (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2): Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 153,525. Single issue nearest to filing date: 132,400.
D. Free Distribution by mail, carrier, or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies: Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 125. Single issue nearest to filing date: 125.
E. Total Distribution: (Sum of C and D): Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 153,650. Single issue nearest to filing date: 132,525.
F. Copies Not Distributed: 1) Office use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing. Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 600. Single issue nearest to filing date: 600. 2) Returns from News Agents: Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 117,515. Single issue nearest to filing date: 114,100.
G. Total (Sum of E, F1 and 2 should equal net press run shown in A): Average no. of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 281,765. Single issue nearest to filing date: 247,225.
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